

We Claim:

1. A method of developing and communicating information regarding the automotive industry that provides a market based system for sustaining the environment by using the Internet, said method comprising the steps of:
- a) identifying cars and light-trucks as a class of vehicles manufactured by the automotive industry from which consumers may choose a vehicle for purchase and for which consumers may desire to have environmental performance information to consider as a factor in selecting a vehicle for purchase,
 - b) establishing an e-commerce company for evaluating the individual vehicles of said class of vehicles in respect to the environmental performance of each individual vehicle, said company being independent of the members of the automotive industry;
 - c) said e-commerce company developing an objective environmental performance rating system based upon a rating algorithm driven by quality assured data,

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d) obtaining said data over the
Internet from government sources and private
sector sources,

e) processing the data into ratings in
5 accordance with said algorithm to identify the
vehicles which are the most environmentally
sensitive,

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f) presenting physical awards in
recognition of the most environmentally sensitive
10 vehicles to the manufacturers of those vehicles,

g) said e-commerce company
establishing an Internet web site to communicate
to consumers and other stake-holders the rating
system and the identification of vehicles with the
15 highest ratings, the award winning vehicles,

h) said e-commerce company
facilitating the promotion of the results of said
environmental performance evaluation in accordance
with said ratings by companies winning the awards
20 and by e-commerce product information/buying
services to communicate to consumers and other
stake-holders, via the Internet and other media,
identification of the vehicles which are the most
environmentally sensitive.

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such identification being the same as that used in
advertising by the manufacturers and retailers,

1) producing said ratings in timed
relationships with the beginning of the model year
5 of the industry,

m) establishing and implementing communication plans for identifying the top environmental performers to consumers for the model year whereby consumers will be enabled to sustain the environment by purchasing the identified vehicles and are benefited by an improved environment and benefited by improved vehicle operating costs.

15 3. A method as defined by Claim 1 for helping a vehicle manufacturer to increase it's sales of vehicles which are among the best in environmental performance ratings, wherein said method includes the steps of:

20 n) / establishing a national recognition
for said ratings and said physical awards,

o) facilitating the use by the vehicle manufacturer of the rating system and the use of

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r) / facilitating the advertisement and the identification of the top-rated vehicles to induce consumers to buy the top-rated vehicles,

s) whereby the impact of vehicles on the environment will be decreased.

5. A method as defined by claim 1 for
5 helping automotive e-commerce businesses
(including e-commerce product information services
and e-commerce buying services) increase the
number of visitors to their web sites,

t) said e-commerce company
10 establishing links between its web site and the
web sites of the automotive e-commerce businesses
to permit visitors to the web sites of the
automotive e-commerce businesses to obtain
independent verification of ratings and awards,

15 u) whereby the automotive e-commerce
businesses will enjoy a better public image for
providing environmental performance data and
whereby consumer-usable environmental information
will favorably differentiate the automotive e-
20 commerce businesses and provide increased revenue
for them.

6. A method of developing and communicating
information regarding an industry that provides a

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market-based system for sustaining the environment
by using the Internet, said method comprising the
steps of:

a) selecting an industry from a group
5 of industries having needs for improved
environmental communications and marketing for its
products,

b) identifying a class of products manufactured by the selected industry from which consumers may choose a product for purchase and for which consumers may desire to have environmental performance information to consider as a factor in selecting a product for purchase,

c) establishing a new e-commerce company for evaluating the individual products of said class of products in respect to the environmental performance of each individual product, said company being independent of the members of the selected industry. ' ,

20 d) said e-commerce company developing
an objective environmental performance rating
system of the products based upon a rating
algorithm driven by quality assured data,

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e) obtaining said data from government sources and private sector sources,

f) processing the data into ratings in accordance with said algorithm to identify the
5 products which are the most environmentally sensitive,

g) and presenting physical awards in recognition of the most environmentally sensitive products to the manufacturers of those products,

10 h) establishing web site to communicate the rating system and the top environmental performers to consumers and other stakeholders,

i) said e-commerce company
15 facilitating the promotion of the results of said environmental performance evaluation in accordance with said ratings by companies winning the awards and e-commerce product information/buying services to communicate to consumers and other stake-
20 holders, via the Internet and other media identification of the products which are the most environmentally sensitive.

j) whereby consumers, having an unfulfilled need to sustain the environment, are

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enabled to select and buy an award winning vehicle
that is among the top environmentally sensitive
products of the available products and companies
offering such products achieve increased sales and
5 are encouraged thereby to develop and sell new
products that are more environmentally sensitive,

k) and whereby the environment is
improved because more environmentally sensitive
products are purchased and developed instead of
10 less environmentally sensitive products, thereby
establishing a market-driven, as opposed to
government regulated, approach to improving the
environment.

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